

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, February 15. 1709.

I Am for the present diverted from the work I have prepar'd, of exposing the Crimes of some of our Clergy, by the more pressing Occasions of the Publick in Matters of Trade; but before I quit it, I must give the Reader one Letter, which I receiv'd upon this Subject, since what I had said in my last; and which I suppose by some Circumstances to come from a Clergy-Man, and a very valuable Reverend Person.

MR. REVIEW,

I Am sorry in all your Contest with the Author of the Rehearsal, you have not yet discover'd his Drift in all his Papers, and that while he pretends feignedly to vindicate our Church, his Design is but to expose and weaken the Church of England, so which as

now by Law Establish'd he is a profess'd Enemy. It is evident to considering Persons, that he puts you upon this Work, and thinks to force you to fall upon the Clergy, on purpose to render the Church of England odious and contemptible: I hope, you will see this, and be tender therefore of exposing the Follies of the Clergy; it is but too true, and good Men regret it much, that we are remiss in our Discipline, and that some of our Clergy are too loose and degenerate in their Manners; but it is to be hop'd, a Time may come, when the House of GOD shall be purg'd. I hope, there are a great many good Men with them and I thank you for the Respect you profess to such; and if you would spare the Rest for their Sakes, you would not repent such an Excess of Charity,

Your Friend unknown, &c.

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I think this Letter very modest and very ingenuous; and tho' I do not know the Person, I shall show a great Regard to his Motion; yet I must crave leave to differ from him in this, That the Satyr upon the vicious Clergy at all concerns the vertuous, pious, reverend Remainder, of which as I did before, so I do again acknowledge, there are a great Number now in the Church. But the Design of a Satyr upon the Vicious is to rouse up and excite those Gentlemen, whose Right it is, and have Power in their Hands, that they would restore the Discipline of the Church to its uninterrupted Exercise, and that they would remove the scandalous, the ignorant, and the Insufficient from the Altar; but I cannot but think, that exposing the drunken, the lewd, the swearing, the blaspheming Bullies of the Church is no more a Reproach, than it was a Reproach upon the Eleven Disciples, when our Lord said, one of them was a Devil; or

than it was scandalous in the rest of the Apostles to call him the Son of Perdition, *Acts 3. . . No Man is concern'd in a Charge of Vice, but the Vicious; no Man is touch'd in a Scandal, but the Scandalous.* And if any Clergyman complains of my saying there are Drunkards, or Whore-Masters, or Swearers among them; is it not most natural to say, *Why are you angry, Sir? Are you ONE of them? Does the Garment fit you? — Is the Picture drawn there your Likeness? — If it be not, why are you angry? Why are you mov'd, if you are not touch'd?*

But after all we shall see, whether the Gentleman above be in the right; I shall therefore leave the Discourse for the present. If the *Rehearsal* moves farther to urge the Publication of Particulars, he certainly covets and drives at reproaching the Church, and exposing the Clergy; if he does not, he will rest satisfy'd with what has been said.

MISCELLANEA.

I Thought to have delay'd any Discourses of Trade till the Beginning of the next Month, when the next Volume being design'd to begin, I purpos'd to dedicate one Part of this Work wholly to Trade; but as I see the Parliament wholly taken up upon Improvements, especially relating to the Trade of *Scotland*, but in general of *Britain*, I cannot help speaking my Mind on some main Points, which are like to take up some of our Debates; and tho' in this I shall be something irregular, and must necessarily go over some of these Things again, yet I must be born with in that Tautology, for the Sake of evident and publick Utility.

For stating therefore what I purpose to discourse of at present, tho' summarily, and in general I shall lay them down under the following Heads.

1. The Affair of Paper-Credit, circulating Bills, and enlarging or extending Credit, with some Enquiry into the Advantage of publick Credit, and how it might be extended in this Nation.

2. The Trade to *Africa*, in which I shall shall speak to two grand Enquiries, 1. Whether that Trade is useful to *England*, and necessary to be preserv'd or no? And 2. If it be, how to be so established as to be render'd most useful, whether in an exclusive Company, or an open Trade.
3. The Case of opening a Trade with *France*, whether it ought or ought not to be done at this Time? And here the *Virginia* Merchants must excuse me, if I take the Freedom to give any Thoughts on their late Petition to the *House of Commons*.
4. The Fishing Trade in *Scotland*, with the Affair of Drawbacks and Encouragements; in which, if I should not altogether agree with some Gentlemen, who so warmly insist upon the Allowances upon Fish cur'd with Salt imported before the 1st of *May*, and which paid no Duty; I hope, those Gentlemen will excuse me, for the Sake

Sake of other Instances I shall give of my meaning well to the Trade of *North Britain*.

I shall discourse on all these, but in a summary Way at this Time, being as I noted above to go over them all again, when I come to discourse of the several Branches of Trade in particular.

I begin with the Affair of Publick Credit, or more particularly, Paper Credit, &c. It is not to be suppos'd, that in my Discourse on this I mean any thing else, than the present extended Length of Paper-Credit now Establish'd between the Bank and the Exchequer.

If I was to write Panegyricks, I could draw a Map here of the present Posture of the Exchequer and Bank of *England*, and compare them, or draw a Parallel between them and the Finances of *France*, Town-House of *Paris*, &c. I do confess, it has something miraculous to think, how the Finances, or Exchequer, or Banks in *France* have kept up any Reputation at all, under so many publick Disasters, when we see our Bank so endanger'd, and our Publick Credit so easily shock'd, as at the last Alarm of an Invasion, which tho' in it self it could not have hurt us, so as to be fatal, nor any way have affected our Funds, yet had the Enemy landed, and the Conservation of the People gone on, the Blow to Publick Credit had been very terrible.

To enquire into the Causes of this would be too tedious; but a few are these.

1. And principally the Pique of Parties here, who really alarm the People politickly on purpose to drive them into Confusions—— I have nothing to do to name Person, nor should I ever have suspected a certain Gentleman, if he had not made some faint Attempts to throw it off, by which some ill-natur'd People said, he had made the better Side the worse.

And here, Gentlemen, you may see the Benefit of National Union and Peace at home. *France* being all of a Piece, and their National Interest the same in every hand, they can maintain their

publick Credit under the most terrible Convulsions imaginable; *Hocksted*, *Turin*, *Barcelons*, *Ramellies*, *Oudenard*, *Lisle*, any one of them had been a Blow to us, would have stagnated our Cash, stop'd our Funds, Rabb'd our Credit, and thrown our Bank into a Fit of an Appoplexy—— The Reason is plain, they have no divided Interest, no setrec Enviars at the Government, all their united Endeavours obey the Voice of the publick Safety, and they keep up Credit without Funds, when we have sometimes Funds without Credit.

2. Liberty, tho' 'tis a Jewel not to be sold or pawn'd, yet has some little Difficulties in it, and this is one; That upon every Hurry we can with more Freedom fly in the Face of publick Credit, than they can; In *France* any Singularity of that Kind would not be resented only, but punish'd: Now, tho' this is nothing to imitate, yet it is a Reason, why they are not so push'd at upon Extremities, the absolute Dominion of the Monarch commanding a more subjected acquiescing Temper.

3. The Stock-jobbing Humour in *England* is calculated to this End, and has been the Occasion of it; *viz.* That we are too much apt to be surpriz'd in *England*, and to run up and run down upon the least Turn of Affairs; whereas, if People would be a little easie, the Hurry would be immediately over, and Things return to their own Channel; 'tis the Fright, not the Substance of the Fear.

It is plain, had the *French* landed in *Scotland*, nay, had they reduc'd *Scotland* entirely, or should they do it now, which I think there is no Fear of; yet all our publick Funds, our Banks, our Stocks were just as good as before; and how could it be otherwise? Is not the Nation entirely and universally embark'd in them? If the Nation stands, they stand; if the Nation does not stand, then nothing we have is our own, nor is it safer in our own keeping than in the publick Funds: But are not all
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the Families in the Nation, *Whig and Tory, High Church, Low Church, swearing Dissenter, and Non-Jurant Dissenter, Jacobite and Williamite*, embark'd? And what's the Consequence? Is it not this? That whatever Revolutions should happen, the publick Funds must be made good, nor can any Parliament or Convention dissolve them, unless you can suppose a Parliament to be chosen of Gentlemen who have no Money in these Funds, and that must be, when such a Parliament are all Thieves or Beggars, for it cannot be before.

'Tis therefore the greatest Madness in Nature to run upon publick Credit, to sell Tallies or Annuities under Rate, and put a Slur upon publick Funds in Time of Danger, since the Foundation is the same, and the Hazard the same in or out— And this is only a Time to give cunning Knaves an Opportunity to buy your Estates cheap.

Why does not Land fall too at such a Time as this? O say they, Land cannot be carry'd away; I answer, no more can the Funds, on which our Banks, Annuities, and other Anticipations are establish'd; for the Land is engag'd, and you may carry one away as soon as the other. Nothing therefore can ruin our publick Credit, but our own National Madness.

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